Summary of Broadway Blueprint Phase 1: Economic Development Revitalization Study

Completed February 2022

Broadway Location:

Broadway consists of the area along Broadway Street in Albemarle County adjacent to the City of Charlottesville and Franklin Street. Broadway is bounded to the north by the railroad track, to the east by Franklin Street, to the south by Moore's Creek Lane, and east by Moore's Creek and the Rivanna River. Most of the area is zoned and used for light industrial uses such as distribution, warehousing, breweries, and commercial services.

Phase 1 – Goals & Rationale:

Over the last 5 years, Broadway has experienced significant change, including the opening of WillowTree's corporate campus at the Woolen Mills site. Due to the presence of WillowTree and an increase in activity along the Rivanna River during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a renewed interest from Broadway property owners and other potential developers about the future use of the area, especially an interest in how to integrate lifestyle options i.e., tasting room, event space, to support the primary businesses and leverage greater public activity within Broadway.

In anticipation of the changes that WillowTree would bring to the area, The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors directed staff to complete the Phase 1 Broadway Blueprint Study to explore ways to leverage the unique assets of Broadway for business development opportunities with a focus on encouraging adaptive reuse.

Phase 1 Findings:

Phase 1 identified the following intention for Broadway:

Leverage public and private investment associated with Woolen Mills site redevelopment and relocation of the WillowTree corporate campus to encourage economic vitality, connectivity and placemaking along the Broadway business corridor.

The Study identifies measures that can further this intention within the three focus areas of Economic Vitality, Connectivity, and Placemaking. Recommendations include balancing new uses within Broadway with the existing light industrial uses, improving pedestrian access and safety, and creating spaces for public activities and events. The Phase 1 Study also identifies the need to consider the impacts of redevelopment and the potential for increasing property values, higher rents, and displacement, as the area becomes a more popular destination (see pg. 2 for a full list of Phase 1 recommendations).

Next Steps:

The Broadway Blueprint Phase 1 Study proposes a future planning effort to further the work that was begun in Phase 1. In summer of 2023, the County is kicking off The Broadway Blueprint Phase 2 Implementation Study. Phase 2 will build on the findings from Phase 1 and will consider what implementation steps the County and its partners can take to support the intention and goals identified in Phase 1.





Full Recommendations from Broadway Blueprint Phase 1

Broadway Blueprint Intention

Leverage public and private investment associated with Woolen Mills site redevelopment and relocation of the WillowTree corporate campus to encourage economic vitality, connectivity and placemaking along the Broadway business corridor.

Broadway Blueprint Focus Areas

1. **Focus Area - Economic Vitality**
    - Achieving a diverse array of opportunities that would add vibrancy to the corridor while minimizing conflicts between potential new uses and existing businesses
    - Balancing potential new uses and established uses with an awareness of how that balance will impact light industrial capacity/inventory in the County
    - Furthering the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan (Project ENABLE), including increasing the sites for primary businesses and create jobs
    - Addressing cost impacts on existing/future property owners/small businesses, including artists/makers, who might be challenged by property value/rental price increases
    - Evaluating and addressing current and future parking challenges/needs
    - Identify strategies to mitigate gentrification including land ownership and subsidies
    - Create corridor business association like DCI (Downtown Crozet Initiative)

2. **Focus Area - Connectivity**
    - Maximizing potential for multi-modal transportation including pedestrian, bike, trails and transit options to provide connectivity to downtown/river/ Pantops/other assets
    - Evaluating and addressing current and future challenges to the transportation network serving the corridor
    - Connectivity to all outside communities including the City
    - Consider targeted programming and public space to serve broader neighborhoods
    - Pedestrian/bike connectivity
    - Design study for multimodal streetscape
    - Enhance public transportation
3. **Focus Area – Placemaking**
    - Creating eclectic, diverse array of spaces for business retention/expansion
    - Creating and supporting spaces for public activities/events
    - Enhancing pedestrian environment/experience/safety
    - Providing compelling destination for both businesses and people
    - Arts/cultural district

4. **Phase 2 Engagement Recommendations:**
    - Conduct proactive community engagement to ensure representation from all surrounding neighborhoods and impacted stakeholders through the duration of the planning process
    - Visit all businesses on Broadway Street corridor